

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated June 10, 2003, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to and rejections of the claims.

Claim 11 was objected to as containing an informality. In response thereto, the claim has been amended to remove the phrase identified in the Office Action. More particularly, the subject matter covered by the claim has been divided into two claims, 11 and 17, to provide separate coverage of the different implementations of a ticket.

In addition, some of the other claims have been amended to improve their readability.

Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 11 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102, on the grounds that they were considered to be anticipated by Published European Patent Application No. 0169278. In addition, claims 3-5 and 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 on the basis of the EP '278 reference. It is respectfully submitted, however, that this reference neither anticipates, nor otherwise suggests, the subject matter set forth in the rejected claims.

The EP '278 reference is directed to the same general objective as the present invention, namely the ability to enable a person to use a single ticket for services provided by multiple operators. However, the manner in which that objective is achieved in the context of the EP '278 reference is significantly different from the present invention. As described in Applicant's previous response, a system in accordance with the present invention includes a first means that is specific to a first operator for acquiring information from a ticket issued by that operator and authorizing a surface according to the acquired

information. In addition, a second means, identified as a "consulate", is provided for receiving information from a ticket issued by another operator, and transmitting an authorization to render the service to the first means.

With apparent reference to claim 1, the Office Action states that the sorting device disclosed in the EP '278 reference, for example at Figures 2-8, comprises a first means specific to a first operator for acquiring information from a ticket 55 issued by the first operator and for authorizing a service according to the information acquired. It is respectfully submitted that the sorter does not constitute a first means of the type recited in claim 1. The claim recites that the first means is specific to a first operator. In the example described in the EP '278 reference, a common ticket 55 can be used by a passenger for transportation on both a train and a bus, for example as illustrated in Figure 1. Referring to Figure 11, the sorters are located at the offices 64, 65 and 66 of the respective bus companies a, b and c (page 16, lines 4-9). Thus, in the context of claim 1, a bus company constitutes the "first operator", since the sorting device is specific to that operator.

Claim 1 goes on to recite that the first means acquires information from a ticket "issued by said first operator." In the example of the reference, the bus company issues the tickets 56 (page 15, lines 9-14). The sorter does not operate to acquire information from these tickets. Rather, it functions to separate the tickets 55, issued by the railway company, from the tickets 56 issued by the bus company. Once the tickets have been separated, the tickets 56, i.e. tickets issued by the "first operator," are discharged directly

into a shredder (page 17, line 25 to page 18, line 5). The sorting device does not "acquire" information from the tickets issued by the bus company.

Claim 1 further recites that the first means functions to authorize a service according to the information acquired. Since the sorter does not acquire information from the tickets issued by the bus company, it cannot perform this additional function of "authorizing" a service. In the system of the reference, the service, namely transportation via the bus, has already been provided by the time that the ticket reaches the sorter. Hence, in the system of the EP '278 reference, there is no need to perform any type of authorization.

The rejection of the claims states that the consulate means recited in claim 1 corresponds to means for reading information from the ticket purchased from station X at the bus station a", b" or c". In the system of the reference, the information that is read from the common tickets 55 is sent from the offices 64, 65 and 66 of the bus companies to a computation center 67, which computes fares associated with the transportation services that were provided. From these fares, bills are sent from the bus companies to the railway company (page 18, lines 16-27).

In contrast to this arrangement, claim 1 recites that the consulate means receives information from a ticket issued by another operator and transmits "to the first means authorization to render said service according to the information obtained..." In the system of the EP '278 reference, the means for reading information from the ticket purchased from a railway station does not transmit an authorization to render a service to the first means, namely the sorter. As noted above, in the system of the reference, the tickets are collected *after* the services have already been provided. Consequently, there is no need to transmit

any form of authorization. Furthermore, to the extent that information is transmitted from one entity to another, the fare data is transmitted from the bus company back to the railway company. It is not transmitted to the "first means," i.e. the sorting device, as recited in the claim.


For at least these reasons, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claim 1, as well as its dependent claims, is neither anticipated nor otherwise suggested by the EP '278 reference. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that a number of other features of the invention, recited in the various dependent claims, are likewise not disclosed or suggested by the reference. In view of the distinctions noted above, a detailed discussion of these other features is not deemed to be necessary at this time.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 9, 2003

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